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THESIS

**NATO AND THE WAR ON TERRORISM:
OBJECTIVES AND OBSTACLES**

by

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March 2004

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NATO AND THE WAR ON TERRORISM: OBJECTIVES AND OBSTACLES

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the
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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the role of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in the global war on terrorism. It focuses on NATO's objectives as well as the obstacles to its active and effective participation in countering this new security challenge. The thesis first analyzes NATO's response to the terrorist attacks against the United States on 11 September 2001 and the resulting transformation in NATO's strategic focus and capabilities, which is designed to ensure its relevance in the new security environment. The thesis then examines the key political and military factors that might, in some circumstances, undermine the Atlantic Alliance and hinder the important task of combating terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. These factors constitute challenges that must be successfully met for the Atlantic Alliance to play a strong role in the war on terrorism.

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Soli Deo Gloria

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I. INTRODUCTION

A. STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

This thesis examines the role of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization in the global war on terrorism. It focuses on NATO's objectives in this conflict and the obstacles to an increased global role for the Atlantic Alliance. The thesis begins with an examination of NATO's response to the terrorist attacks against the United States on 11 September 2001. It then examines NATO's key objectives in combating terrorism, including acquiring the requisite capabilities to respond to global threats. After an overview of these major objectives, the key trans-Atlantic obstacles to such an increased global role are analyzed. This topic is important because NATO's future relevance as the central vehicle for trans-Atlantic security and defense cooperation is at stake.

B. BACKGROUND

The terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001 irrevocably altered the international security environment. Only a decade after the conclusion of the Cold War, a new global strategic menace surfaced – the threat posed by the nexus of international terrorist organizations, the countries that aid these groups, and the potential access of these actors to weapons of mass destruction. The United States, in response to these attacks, launched what it has called “the global war on terrorism.”¹ President George W. Bush summarized the U.S. approach in this new war when he said,

We must take the battle to the enemy, disrupt his plans and confront the worst threats before they emerge. In the world we have entered, the only path to safety is the path of action.²

¹ In this thesis, the author defines the global war on terrorism as: “Active and on-going offensive and defensive operations of a global scope against terrorist groups and state entities who sponsor and support terrorist groups. Included in this campaign are efforts to counter the threat posed by weapons of mass destruction in the hands of such actors.” While an officially agreed definition does not exist, the term “global war on terrorism” is used throughout the U.S. Government to describe the activities outlined above. (For an example, please see: [<http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2001/12/100dayreport.html>]).

² President George W. Bush, Speech at West Point, 1 June 2002. Quoted from the *National Strategy for Combating Terrorism* (Washington, D.C.: The White House, February 2003), p. 11.

This path of action includes defeating terrorist organizations and denying sponsorship and sanctuary to such groups. American policy explicitly states that “the United States and its *friends and allies* will secure a world in which our children can live free from fear and where the threat of terrorist attacks does not define our daily lives.”³

This new threat has prompted a vigorous debate within the North Atlantic Treaty Organization on what role it should have in this global campaign. NATO was established in 1949 to protect the territorial sovereignty of its member states. The Strategic Concept adopted by the North Atlantic Council in 1991 reemphasized this purpose:

The Alliance is purely defensive in purpose: none of its weapons will ever be used except in self-defense... The role of the Alliance’s military forces is to assure the territorial integrity and political independence of its member states, and thus to contribute to peace and stability in Europe.⁴

While NATO evolved from a collective defense alliance to an organization with a greater collective security role in the 1990’s, notably with interventions and peacekeeping operations in the Balkans, it still limited itself to operations within Europe, the Mediterranean Sea, and the North Atlantic Ocean. Yet, the threat of terrorism coupled with weapons of mass destruction, what NATO Secretary-General Lord Robertson described as the “greatest security challenge of the new century,”⁵ and the corresponding global campaign to defeat this threat have brought about a radical redefinition of NATO’s primary role as a guarantor of territorial sovereignty and security in the Euro-Atlantic region.

At the core of this radical shift in NATO doctrine is the prospect of transitioning from a security alliance focused on the Euro-Atlantic region to an organization possessing the political will and military ability to operate on a global scale as a participant in the campaign against terrorism. Such a doctrinal shift would entail a substantial transformation of the Atlantic Alliance from its foundational missions because it would require an ability and willingness to act globally to project power, stabilize

³ National Strategy for Combating Terrorism (Washington, D.C.: The White House, February 2003) p. 12, emphasis added.

⁴ North Atlantic Council, Strategic Concept, 7 November 1991, paragraph 36.

⁵ Tackling Terror: NATO’s New Mission. Speech by NATO Secretary-General Lord Robertson to the American Enterprise Institute, 20 June 2002. Available at: [<http://www.nato.int/docu/speech/2002/s020620a.htm>]. 11 May 2003.

specific regions, and use force – if necessary – to counter terrorist threats to Alliance members and international security. The imperative requirement for this transition cannot be ignored by the Atlantic Alliance. Senior NATO official Michael Rühle has argued that the dramatic “changes in the international security environment had become too fundamental to allow for business as usual. Both the transatlantic relationship in general, and NATO in particular, have had to adapt to the realization that the immediate post-Cold War period has ended and a new, still undefined era has begun.”⁶

The result of this change in the trans-Atlantic security environment has been the call by many NATO member countries, led by the United States, for a dramatic transformation of NATO to enable it to play an increased global role. Rühle states that such a transition is vital to NATO’s future survival because if NATO was “unable or unwilling to play such a role, it would become completely detached from the US security agenda,” and such detachment from NATO’s leading member would likely cause NATO’s decline as a vibrant security institution.⁷ Many influential policy-makers and scholars, in addition to many NATO governments, share this sentiment. They argue that the relevance of NATO in the 21st century is directly related to its effectiveness as a participant in this global war on terrorism.⁸ Senator Richard Lugar (Republican of Indiana), chairman of the U.S. Senate’s Committee on Foreign Relations, and a respected NATO observer, eloquently stated this position during an April 2003 committee hearing:

With [U.S.] forces heavily engaged in Iraq, this Committee and the Senate must consider what role NATO can and should play in the global war on terrorism. NATO has to decide if it wants to participate in the security challenge of our time. It has to decide whether it wants to be relevant in addressing the major threat to the safety and economic well being of the

⁶ Michael Rühle, “NATO After Prague: Learning the Lessons of 9/11,” *Parameters, US Army War College Quarterly*, Summer 2003, p. 91.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ An example of legislators in a NATO member government agreeing with this premise can be found in the United Kingdom’s House of Commons Defence Committee report, *The Future of NATO*. “The threat which terrorism poses to global security was suddenly perceived as more pressing and dangerous, because of the scale of the attacks, their goal of mass casualties, their perpetration by a highly organized and mobile terrorist network which acknowledged no boundaries to its activities, and the willingness of terrorists to sacrifice their own lives. As a result of 11 September, and if the Alliance is to be relevant against a threat which no longer has borders, the transformation which NATO has effected to date in its role and missions since the end of the Cold War will require another step change.” House of Commons Defence Committee, *The Future of NATO*, Seventh Report of Session 2001-02, HC 914 (London: The Stationary Office Limited, 31 July 2002), p. 15, par. 23.

citizens of its component countries. If we do not prevent major terrorist attacks involving weapons of mass destruction, the Alliance will have failed in the most fundamental sense of defending our nations and our way of life.⁹

However, some observers oppose such a globalized function for NATO. Steve Larrabee, holder of the Corporate Chair in European Security at the RAND Corporation, in responding to such opposition has written that it is imperative that NATO realize that “the threats facing the Alliance are more diverse and geographically distant than during the Cold War.”¹⁰ He argues that those who oppose a global role for NATO and prefer an Alliance that remains focused on threats within Europe and its immediate periphery operate from a perception that is “anachronistic and wrong-headed.” Such a view “fails to recognize the degree to which the nature and locus of the challenges facing Europe and the United States have changed since the end of the Cold War, and especially since the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001.”¹¹

Even if the notion that NATO must become a politically committed and militarily capable participant in the global campaign against terrorism to remain relevant is generally accepted, significant trans-Atlantic obstacles to such a transformation remain. This thesis, in addition to examining NATO’s stated objectives in the war against terrorism, analyzes the key political and military obstacles in the trans-Atlantic arena to an increased global role for NATO.

The trans-Atlantic bond, traditionally the core strength of the Alliance, is of critical importance for any NATO transformation. As U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell told the Senate in April 2003, “This great alliance, which has kept the peace for more than 50 years, is more than a treaty for collective defense, it is the central organizing force in a great web of relationships that holds North America and Europe together.”¹²

⁹ Richard Lugar, Statement at the 8 April 2003 Hearing of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, “The Role of NATO Today.” Available at: [www.expandnato.org/dicklnato3.html]. 11 May 2003.

¹⁰ Steve Larrabee & François Heisbourg, “How Global A Role Can and Should NATO Play?” *NATO Review*, Spring 2003. Available at [www.nato.int/docu/review/2003/issue1/english/debate.html]. 14 May 2003.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Colin Powell quoted in Nicholas Burns, “NATO Has Adapted: An Alliance With A New Mission,” *International Herald Tribune*, 24 May 2003.

C. METHODOLOGY

This thesis is based on primary and secondary sources. The primary sources include NATO communiqués relating to the Alliance's new roles, missions and proposed initiatives. In addition, personal interviews with NATO and government officials conducted by the author at NATO Headquarters in Brussels, Belgium, and at Supreme Headquarters, Allied Powers Europe (SHAPE) in Mons, Belgium, compose a critical element of the body of research. The secondary sources include works by political-military analysts in professional journals, newspapers, and other publications. Other secondary sources include the author's interviews with expert observers outside government in Europe and North America.

D. CHAPTER OUTLINE

The thesis is organized as follows. Chapter II examines the NATO response to the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001 and NATO's primary objectives in the global war on terrorism. It reviews the key components of NATO's transformation in strategic focus. These components include NATO's new Military Concept for Defense Against Terrorism, its participation in operations beyond Europe and North America, and the dramatic changes in NATO's military command structure.

Chapter II then analyzes the Prague Capabilities Commitment and Allied Command Transformation as key elements in transforming NATO's capabilities. The PCC addresses the requirements for enhancements in the capabilities, tactics, and interoperability of NATO forces in order to project power beyond the traditional area of NATO operations more effectively. Allied Command Transformation is designed to keep NATO fully aligned with rapid operational and technological changes. This function is critical in order for the Alliance to remain effective since the forces of member nations must be interoperable and integrated to fight in a unified manner. Chapter II concludes with an examination of the NATO Response Force (NRF). The NRF is designed to be a flexible, interoperable and deployable joint force that draws from a rotational pool of combat forces that could be rapidly adapted to specific missions.

Chapter III examines the key trans-Atlantic obstacles to NATO playing an increasingly important role in the global campaign against terrorism. In order for NATO to become an active and effective participant in this campaign, it must undergo a

substantial transformation. However, significant trans-Atlantic political and military obstacles must be overcome before this ambitious vision can be realized. Since NATO makes its decisions by consensus, a strategic policy rift between Alliance members can cause paralysis. The issues covered in this chapter include opposition in Europe to the new U.S. national security strategy of preemption, the strain on the trans-Atlantic relationship due to anti-Americanism in some circles in Europe, and the possible emergence of competing views of international order in Europe and the United States.

Chapter III also assesses the key military obstacles facing the Alliance with a particular focus on the core competencies required for sustained global operations and the threat to Alliance cohesion and effectiveness posed by the widening trans-Atlantic capabilities gap. Lessons from Operation Allied Force, NATO's air campaign against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in 1999, are examined in addition to shortfalls in the critical areas of defense spending, force structure, and interoperability.

The final chapter offers conclusions regarding NATO's emerging global role in the war on terrorism. The chapter synthesizes the key findings and recommends possible solutions to the challenges facing the Atlantic Alliance as it undergoes this strategic metamorphosis.

II. NATO'S OBJECTIVES IN THE WAR ON TERRORISM

A. INTRODUCTION: NATO'S RESPONSE TO 11 SEPTEMBER 2001

On 11 September 2001, at a time when some observers had doubts about the utility of the Atlantic Alliance in the post-Cold War world, NATO's future changed dramatically with the terrorist attacks on the United States. Whether NATO can adapt to combat this new threat from terrorism is a critical issue for its relevance in the 21st century. To answer this question, it is important to examine what NATO has done and what it proposes to do in order to be an active participant in the global war on terrorism.

On 12 September 2001, less than 24 hours after the terrorist attacks on the United States, the North Atlantic Council, NATO's governing body, invoked Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty for the first time in the Alliance's history. In doing so, NATO declared that the attack against the United States was to be regarded as an attack against all 19 NATO allies. Article 5 of the North Atlantic (or Washington) Treaty reads in part:

The Parties agree that an armed attack against one or more of them in Europe or North America shall be considered an attack against them all and consequently they agree that, if such an armed attack occurs, each of them, in exercise of the right of individual or collective self-defense recognized by Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations, will assist the Party or Parties so attacked by taking forthwith, individually and in concert with the other Parties, such action as it deems necessary, including the use of armed force, to restore and maintain the security of the North Atlantic area.¹³

This invocation of Article 5 demonstrated NATO's intent to play a role in the response to the 11 September attacks. In response to requests for assistance from the United States, NATO allies took several measures to support the global war on terrorism. These measures included granting blanket over-flight rights and access to airfields and bases for U.S. forces during Operation Enduring Freedom (the United States-led military response to the 11 September attacks) in addition to enhanced intelligence sharing on the terrorist threat.

¹³ "What is Article V?" Available at [<http://www.nato.int/terrorism/five.htm>]. 17 November 2003.

One of the more significant forms of support was the first-ever deployment of NATO's Airborne Warning and Control System (AWACS) aircraft to assist the United States in patrolling American airspace.¹⁴ NATO's Operation Eagle Assist, as it was known, was active from mid-October 2001 through mid-May 2002. Over 830 crewmembers from 13 NATO countries flew 4,300 hours and over 360 operational sorties.¹⁵ This operation was critical as it allowed U.S. Air Force AWACS aircraft to be transferred to the Middle East for support to operations over Afghanistan.

Another critical NATO contribution to the fight against international terrorism has been Operation Active Endeavor. On 26 October 2001, warships from NATO's Standing Naval Force Mediterranean (STANAVFORMED) were sent to the eastern Mediterranean to monitor merchant shipping and conduct continuous patrols in the area. Merchant interdiction operations (MIO) continue to be a critical element in combating terrorists. Since the genesis of Operation Enduring Freedom, there has been an ongoing concern that terrorist leaders may attempt to escape by sea.¹⁶ For this reason, great emphasis has been placed on the role of MIO in not only finding terrorists, but also intercepting weapons of mass destruction.

It would not be possible to establish this "net at sea" effectively without the ongoing commitment of NATO countries, especially during the more intensive phases of Operation Enduring Freedom when U.S. naval forces were actively supporting combat operations in Afghanistan. NATO's supporting role in MIO freed these American naval assets for other combat support missions. As of October 2003, "about 36,000 merchant vessels" had been monitored, and those that have raised suspicion have been signaled,

¹⁴ NATO possesses AWACS aircraft that are owned collectively and operated by NATO's military command structure. This was the first deployment of NATO assets outside the European theater of operations.

¹⁵ The Key to the Prague Summit – An Agenda for Change from NATO Online Documents. Available at [http://www.nato.int/docu/comm/2002/0211-prague/in_focus/prague-presskit-e.pdf], p. 17. 11 November 2003.

¹⁶ This analysis is based on the author's experience as a member of the intelligence staff for Commander, Task Force-50 (CTF-50) from 12 September 2001 to 18 December 2001. CTF-50 was the overall commander for all coalition naval forces in Operation Enduring Freedom. There existed credible evidence that leaders of Al Qaeda may attempt to escape Afghanistan by sea and CTF-50 was charged with not only contributing roughly one half of all combat air sorties over Afghanistan but in intercepting any possible Al Qaeda members at sea.

shadowed and documented, and in some cases boarded.¹⁷ In February 2003, the North Atlantic Council decided to extend the scope of Operation Active Endeavor to include escorting non-military ships traveling through the Strait of Gibraltar in order to maintain security in the area and to secure the safe transit of designated Allied ships. The narrow Strait of Gibraltar is widely recognized as a potential site for terrorist attacks. Operation Active Endeavor, which involves the navies of many NATO countries, continues to be a critical NATO contribution to the global war on terrorism.¹⁸

While the invocation of Article 5 and the commencement of the two aforementioned NATO operations immediately after 11 September 2001 were dramatic, they were only the beginning of NATO's transformation into an Alliance with both the global reach and the military capability to deal effectively with the asymmetric threats at hand. This chapter investigates NATO's key objectives in the war on terrorism and the corresponding global role such participation entails. In order to do so effectively, this chapter concentrates on NATO's remarkable shift in strategic focus since 11 September 2001 and its goals in transforming and improving military capabilities. The chapter concludes with an analysis of the nascent NATO Response Force, heralded as the centerpiece for NATO operations in the 21st century.

B. TRANSFORMING NATO'S STRATEGIC FOCUS: DEFENSE AGAINST TERRORISM, OUT OF AREA OPERATIONS AND INSTITUTIONAL CHANGES

Since the events of 11 September 2001, NATO has begun a process of transforming itself – including a radical shift in its strategic focus. In describing NATO's metamorphosis, E. V. Buckley, NATO's Assistant Secretary General for Defense Planning and Operations, stated that such transformation

goes beyond military transformation of the technological kind. It involves the adaptation of NATO's structures, capabilities, policies, doctrines and relationships to better suit current and perceived security challenges.¹⁹

¹⁷ "Operation Active Endeavor." Available at [\[http://www.afsouth.nato.int/operations/Endeavour/Endeavour.htm\]](http://www.afsouth.nato.int/operations/Endeavour/Endeavour.htm). 10 January 2004.

¹⁸ The Key to the Prague Summit – An Agenda for Change from NATO Online Documents. Available at [\[http://www.nato.int/docu/comm/2002/0211-prague/in_focus/prague-presskit-e.pdf\]](http://www.nato.int/docu/comm/2002/0211-prague/in_focus/prague-presskit-e.pdf), p. 6, 11 November 2003.

¹⁹ "NATO and ESDP." Speech by E. V. Buckley, NATO Assistance Secretary for Defense Planning and Operations, to the George C. Marshall Center Conference, Berlin, 8 April 2003.

The remarkable transformation in NATO's strategic focus can best be seen in its Military Concept for Defense Against Terrorism, its execution of out-of-area operations, and its dramatic institutional changes.

In December 2001, NATO's Defense Ministers tasked NATO's Military Authorities with preparing a Military Concept for Defense Against Terrorism for approval by the North Atlantic Council (NAC).²⁰ The Military Authorities in turn requested political guidance from the North Atlantic Council in March 2002 on a number of specific issues, including constraints, geographical scope and the definition of "defense" – e.g., whether that could include offensive action. At the Reykjavik ministerial meeting in May 2002, there was intense debate over the language for the final communiqué. According to a Rand report, several Allies advocated the inclusion of a statement that NATO was "prepared to combat terrorism globally and that there would be no limits on NATO's global reach for such operations."²¹ France objected to giving NATO an explicitly global role. However, in the final communiqué, an implicit global role was granted to NATO when the ministers agreed that "NATO must be able to field forces that can move quickly to wherever they are needed, sustain operations over distance and time, and achieve their objectives."²² What was most significant about this meeting was that the Allies agreed to give NATO a global role in combating terrorism – a dramatic change for the venerable alliance.

After the May 2002 ministerial meeting, the NAC delivered its political guidance for the military concept on 12 June 2002. This comprehensive political document stated that NATO's military forces would help "deter, defend, disrupt and protect against attacks or threats of attacks, directed from abroad, including by acting against terrorists and those who harbor them."²³ The NAC also declared that defense against terrorism

²⁰ Some of this information on the Military Concept for Defense Against Terrorism comes from interviews conducted with observers in Europe in September 2003.

²¹ Nora Bensahel, *The Counterterror Coalitions: Cooperation with Europe, NATO, and the European Union*, MR-1746 (Santa Monica: RAND, 2003), p. 24.

²² "Final Communiqué: Ministerial Meeting of the North Atlantic Council Held in Reykjavik on 14 May 2002," Press Release M-NAC-1 (2002) 59, 14 May 2002.

²³ "NATO's Role in Combating Terrorism." Speech by E. V. Buckley, NATO Assistance Secretary for Defense Planning and Operations, to the NATO-Russia Conference on the Role of the Military in Combating Terrorism, Moscow, 9 December 2002.

must be multifaceted and comprehensive and that it was better to deter and prevent terrorist attacks than to deal with their consequences. Most strikingly, the North Atlantic Council, echoing the sentiment of the Reykjavik Communiqué, stated in its Political Guidance that NATO forces must “be prepared to deploy as and where required to deal with particular circumstances as they arise.”²⁴

Shortly after this guidance was issued, NATO’s Military Committee proposed a new military concept to the NAC in October 2002. This concept was officially adopted at the Prague Summit in November 2002. A central component of the Military Concept is that it establishes four categories of military operations under the aegis of “defense against terrorism.” These four categories are anti-terrorism, consequence management, counter-terrorism, and military cooperation. Incorporated into all four categories is the essential element of force protection, which is based on up-to-date threat assessments and is fundamental to any military plan designed for defending against terrorism.

Anti-terrorism is defined by the Military Concept as the use of defensive measures to reduce the vulnerability of forces, individuals and property. It explicitly states that nations have the primary responsibility for the defense of their populations and infrastructure. However, there are roles for the Alliance if a nation requests support. Such roles include improving the effectiveness and responsiveness of NATO’s integrated air defense system, providing missile defense, and assisting a nation wishing to withdraw its citizens from an area of increased terrorist threat. The Military Concept identified timely and accurate intelligence and a NATO standardized threat-warning system as essential requirements for the success of anti-terrorism operations.

Consequence management is the use of reactive measures to mitigate the destructive effects of terrorism. NATO military contributions to consequence management encompass planning and force generation, including the deployment of specialized assistance, such as chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear (CBRN) defense capabilities. On 1 December 2003, NATO made a substantial improvement in its consequence management capabilities with the establishment of the Multinational Chemical, Biological, Radiological, and Nuclear (CBRN) Battalion. The CBRN

²⁴ “NATO’s Military Concept for Defence Against Terrorism.” Available at [\[http://www.nato.int/ims/docu/terrorism.htm\]](http://www.nato.int/ims/docu/terrorism.htm). 10 January 2004.

Battalion, based in Liberec, Czech Republic, is NATO's "new capability designed to respond and defend against the use of weapons of mass destruction both inside and beyond NATO's area of responsibility."²⁵

The Concept also called for the creation of an Alliance Registry of capabilities available on short notice to support national efforts in dealing with the effects of terrorist attacks. It called, moreover, for the establishment of an enhanced training and exercise coordination capacity for the development of multi-national response options to deal with terrorist attacks; and it identified NATO's Euro-Atlantic Disaster Relief Coordination Cell as the potential nucleus for such efforts.

The third pillar of NATO's Military Concept for Defense Against Terrorism is counter-terrorism. Counter-terrorism is offensive military action designed to reduce terrorists' capabilities. The NATO Allies agree that terrorists should not be allowed to base, train, plan, stage and execute terrorist actions and that such a threat may justify acting against these terrorists and those who harbor them. Such operations will be of a joint nature and will utilize psychological and information operations extensively in order to gain the trust of the local population. The Military Concept addresses two broad roles for NATO's involvement in counter-terrorist operations: NATO in the lead and NATO in support.

With NATO in the lead, the Military Concept states that the Alliance must have adequate command and control and intelligence structures along with forces "trained, exercised and maintained" at appropriate readiness levels. While the improvements in capabilities for traditional joint operations are largely the same as those required for counter-terrorist operations, the Military Concept urges that NATO consider adopting procedures and capabilities needed to "support accelerated decision cycles, in order to be successful in detecting and attacking time sensitive targets in the Counter Terrorist

²⁵ "Launch of NATO Multinational CBRN Defence Battalion." Available at [<http://www.nato.int/docu/pr/2003/p031126e.htm>]. 13 January 2004.

environment.”²⁶ In order to achieve such success, NATO requires forces capable of conducting strike operations with precision-guided stand-off munitions and directing conventional fires in addition to specialized anti-terrorist forces.

With NATO in support, the Alliance would provide assets and capabilities to support operations against terrorism. Such support could take various forms: as a “coalition enabler” and interoperability provider, as a means of back-filling national requirements,²⁷ or as a source of Host Nation Support and logistics assistance to include overflight and basing rights. Moreover, NATO’s extensive operational planning capabilities could be utilized to plan a mission and generate a force to support counter-terrorist operations.

The final pillar of the Military Concept is military cooperation. It is generally agreed that military action alone will not be enough to deal with the terrorist threat and that any “military operations should be coordinated and implemented in a coherent manner with diplomatic, economic, social, legal and information initiatives.”²⁸ In most nations, the civil authorities, including law enforcement, intelligence and security services, are the main agencies involved in countering terrorism. Therefore, NATO “military forces will need to operate in support of, and in close coordination with all these agencies”²⁹ in order to be truly effective against terrorism. Inherent in military cooperation is strengthening NATO’s relationships with other international organizations and Partnership for Peace countries. The Military Concept states “that the trust, transparency and interaction already developed through these relationships serve as an excellent vehicle for the further co-ordination of measures to combat terrorism,” and it urges that these relationships be further developed.³⁰

²⁶ “NATO’s Military Concept for Defence Against Terrorism.” Available at [\[http://www.nato.int/ims/docu/terrorism.htm\]](http://www.nato.int/ims/docu/terrorism.htm). 10 January 2004.

²⁷ For example, NATO deployed aircraft to the United States in order to free U.S. AWACS to deploy to Afghanistan for Operation Enduring Freedom.

²⁸ “NATO’s Military Concept for Defence Against Terrorism.” Available at [\[http://www.nato.int/ims/docu/terrorism.htm\]](http://www.nato.int/ims/docu/terrorism.htm). 10 January 2004.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid.

In addition to enunciating four key categories of roles for NATO forces, the Military Concept identifies the requisite capabilities and procedures for its effective implementation. The first required capability is effective intelligence. Success in defending against and defeating terrorism is directly linked to improving intelligence collection, analysis and dissemination. NATO's leaders – from the Secretary General to the junior officers on the International Military Staff – agree on the importance of producing and sharing intelligence information relating to terrorism in a more timely, coherent, and effective manner. Other required capabilities identified in the Military Concept include deployability, readiness, CBRN defense, and effective engagement. As terrorist activities involve little warning and response time, the Military Concept concludes by underscoring the need to make Alliance decision-making as effective and timely as possible in order to deploy forces appropriately to counter the terrorist threat.

Besides the Military Concept for Defense Against Terrorism, another example of NATO's shift in strategic focus in order to participate effectively in the global war on terrorism is its embrace of operations beyond Europe and North America. As recently as the beginning of 2002, the likelihood that NATO would operate beyond its traditional area of responsibility – let alone in another continent – was dubious at best. NATO's first "out of area" operations took place in 1992, if one takes Article 6 of the North Atlantic Treaty as the agreed geographical area of responsibility. From this perspective, all of NATO's Balkan operations since 1992 have been conducted "out of area."

Yet controversy over NATO's operational role beyond Europe and North America was largely put to rest with its assumption of command responsibilities for the United Nations Security Council-mandated International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan on 11 August 2003. ISAF is headquartered in Kabul, and it is designed to allow for the peaceful transition from the Taliban regime to a modern democratic state by maintaining security so that the Afghan Transitional Authority and UN personnel are able to operate in a safe environment. In addition, ISAF may assist the Afghan Transitional Authority in developing and training Afghan security structures and forces and in civil reconstruction.³¹

³¹ Diego A. Ruiz Palmer, "The Road To Kabul," *NATO Review*, Summer 2003. Available at [www.nato.int/docu/review/2003/issue2/english/art3.html]. 21 November 2003.

NATO's first involvement with Afghanistan began with a little known request to NATO by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) for supply assistance for operations in Afghanistan in late 2001. With little fanfare, NATO embarked on its first mission outside Europe or North America. Since then, NATO's involvement in ISAF has expanded dramatically. This multinational force of approximately 5,500 troops has, from its beginning in December 2001, been composed mainly of NATO allies. Indeed, NATO member countries contribute more than 90% of the troops involved in ISAF at any given time.

ISAF was initiated under British command (ISAF 1) for a six-month rotation, and then transferred to Turkish command in July 2002 (ISAF 2). Germany and the Netherlands assumed command of ISAF 3. NATO played an important role in the process of establishing the German-Dutch-led iteration of ISAF when on 27 November 2002, the Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe (SHAPE) in Mons, Belgium, hosted a Force Generation Conference. This was the first time that SHAPE had hosted a Force Generation Conference in support of countries that had offered to lead a military operation based on a UN Security Council Resolution that was not a NATO-led mission. This conference was organized after Germany requested NATO assistance in force generation, intelligence, information sharing, and communications.³² In order to end the pattern of six-month rotations of ISAF command responsibilities and bring increased stability to the mission, the North Atlantic Council decided on 16 April 2003 to "enhance NATO's support for ISAF by taking on the command, coordination and planning of the operation, while keeping the same name, banner and mission."³³

This significant decision, coming shortly after the disagreements among Allies over the U.S.-led military intervention in Iraq in March-April 2003, was seen as a "healing balm" by the Allies; and it may well serve as a model for future NATO

³² "NATO to Support ISAF 3". Available at [www.nato.int/docu/update/2002/11-november/e1127a.htm]. 18 November 2003.

³³ Diego A. Ruiz Palmer, "The Road to Kabul," *NATO Review*, Summer 2003. Available at [www.nato.int/docu/review/2003/issue2/english/art3.html]. 21 November 2003.

operations.³⁴ ISAF was the principal issue during the contentious winter of 2002-2003 on which all the Allies could generally agree. The Allies recognized their common goals regarding Afghanistan and saw in ISAF a way to be tangibly involved in the global war on terrorism. According to a statement published under the authority of the NATO Secretary-General,

taking command of ISAF represents a new departure for the Alliance. It is, however, a natural manifestation of the Alliance's transformation agenda and a demonstration of member states' resolve to meet new security challenges.³⁵

Another critical component of NATO's shift in strategic mindset and an example of the "transformation agenda" is the restructuring of NATO's integrated command apparatus. At the Prague Summit in November 2002, the Heads of State and Government directed that NATO's military command structure be streamlined in order to provide "a leaner, more efficient, effective and deployable command structure with a view to meeting the operational requirements for the full range of Alliance missions."³⁶ Air Vice-Marshal Andrew Vallance, Executive Assistant for Command Structure Implementation to the Chief of Staff at SHAPE, has described the resulting new NATO Command Structure as "the most important development in the Alliance's military organization since NATO's inception over 50 years ago."³⁷

Whereas the previous command structure was largely based on geographic divisions of responsibility, this new structure is based on functionality. NATO's Military Authorities judged that a functionality-based approach to military organizations would

³⁴ The phrase "healing balm" was employed by an authoritative observer in Brussels during an interview in September 2003. According to this observer, missions such as ISAF (Post-Conflict Stabilization Phase Operations) may constitute a likely model for future NATO operations since these missions generally do not involve politically sensitive issues such as "preventive war" and often involve a greater degree of international legitimacy, including U.N. Security Council mandates. Problems with intelligence, command and control, and political oversight are greatly diminished with operations such as ISAF compared to offensive military action.

³⁵ NATO Afghanistan Briefing (October 2003). Available at [\[http://www.nato.int/issues/afghanistan/index.htm\]](http://www.nato.int/issues/afghanistan/index.htm). 18 November 2003.

³⁶ Prague Summit Declaration dated 21 November 2002, para 4b. Available at [\[http://www.nato.int/docu/pr/2002/p02-127e.htm\]](http://www.nato.int/docu/pr/2002/p02-127e.htm). 12 November 2003.

³⁷ Air Vice-Marshal Andrew Vallance, RAF, "Military Matters: A Radically New Command Structure for NATO," *NATO Review*, Autumn 2003. Available at [\[www.nato.int/docu/review/2003/issue3/english/military.html\]](http://www.nato.int/docu/review/2003/issue3/english/military.html). 12 January 2003.

eliminate duplication, streamline efforts and better promote integration and cohesion. During the Cold War (when the predominant mission was to defend territory with static in-place forces) a functionality-based command structure was deemed politically infeasible and militarily unnecessary. Since the early 1990's, however, it has become increasingly clear that NATO faces a new strategic environment that is "more dynamic, fluid and resource-conscious."³⁸ Moreover, given the fact that "real-time, global, mass data transfer is readily available," a functionality-based approach is indispensable.³⁹

At the strategic level, only one command, Allied Command Operations (ACO) headquartered at SHAPE, now possesses overall operational responsibilities. Under this new design, ACO provides strategic advice upwards to the North Atlantic Council and strategic direction downwards to the operational level headquarters.

There are three operational headquarters below ACO. This includes two Joint Force Commands (JFC North and JFC South based in Brunssum, the Netherlands, and Naples, Italy, respectively) and a Joint Headquarters (JHQ West, based in Lisbon, Portugal). There is, in this new arrangement, a clear devolution of operational authority from SHAPE to the two Joint Force Commands.⁴⁰ Each JFC must be capable of providing operational command for any Alliance mission. JHQ West, however, will have a more limited command capability and will be focused on maintaining the capability to command Combined Joint Task Forces (CJTF) from a maritime platform. This shift in operational responsibility will lead to a significant reduction in the SHAPE staff and an increase in the capacity of the headquarters at the operational level. Each JFC will have three component commands representing land, air, and maritime assets. These component commands provide a flexible pool of command assets and functional experts available to be employed under either JFC.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ An example of this increased operational responsibility can be seen in the Regional Headquarters previously known as Allied Forces Northern Europe (AFNORTH). Until recently, AFNORTH's operational function was limited to conducting exercises and integrating new members into the Alliance. Since 2003, AFNORTH (now JFC NORTH) has taken operational command of the ISAF mission in Afghanistan as well as serving as the operational command for the first two iterations of the NATO Response Force – two high priorities for NATO.

This flexibility demonstrates a dramatic departure from the static, geographically limited command structure for NATO forces that was in place until only recently. This reorganization, which has resulted in a dramatic decrease in the total number of headquarters from twenty to eleven, is a vital and necessary aspect of NATO's transformation in strategic focus and is intended to help the Alliance's forces become more responsive and deployable.

C. TRANSFORMING NATO'S CAPABILITIES: THE PRAGUE CAPABILITIES COMMITMENT AND ALLIED COMMAND TRANSFORMATION

While changes in NATO's strategic policies and institutions are necessary to combat the threats posed by terrorism, NATO's leaders have stressed that without a transformation in NATO's capabilities – including improved interoperability, changed doctrine and advances in joint warfare – NATO's relevance and effectiveness will remain in question. Indeed, one of the key decisions at the Prague Summit in November 2002 was the approval of the Prague Capabilities Commitment (PCC). The PCC is designed to ensure that the Alliance possesses the operational capabilities required to effectively deal with the new security threats. Individual NATO countries have made firm and specific political commitments to acquire the capabilities that will enable the Alliance to counter the menace of terrorism successfully.

These improvements in capabilities include the critical areas of chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear defense; intelligence, surveillance and target acquisition; air-to-ground surveillance; command, control and communications; precision guided munitions and suppression of enemy air defenses (SEAD); strategic air and sea lift; air-to-air refueling; and deployable combat support and combat service support units. While certainly a vast task, capability enhancement remains a foundational issue for NATO's continued relevance. However, specific improvements in military capabilities are not enough. In order to combat terrorism and other challenges effectively in the new security environment, NATO has recognized that it must, on the strategic level, transform how it operates, thinks, and trains.

A critical step towards such a transformation in both capability and strategic effectiveness was the establishment of Allied Command Transformation (ACT) on 19

June 2003. ACT supplanted the headquarters for Allied Command Atlantic (ACLANT), a command which was disbanded. ACT's role is to promote transformation, interoperability, and capabilities enhancement in NATO's militaries in order to guarantee that NATO's forces are trained and equipped to meet the challenges of the new security environment. To enhance the trans-Atlantic link and facilitate close interaction and synchronization with U.S. transformation efforts, ACT is co-located with the U.S. Joint Forces Command (USJFCOM) in Norfolk, Virginia. USJFCOM is intended to serve as the transformation engine within the United States military.

At ACT establishment ceremonies NATO Secretary General Lord Robertson stated,

ACT will shape the future of combined and joint operations. It will identify new concepts, and bring them to maturity. It will then turn these transformational concepts into reality; a reality shared by the entire NATO Alliance.⁴¹

According to ACT's website, its central mission is as follows:

ACT leads transformation within the Alliance, to include concept development and military experimentation. It also stimulates transformation in national forces, and those of NATO's Partners. It ensures the infusion of research & technology to address shortfalls and develop new concepts and doctrine through extensive networks. ACT is responsible for joint training and doctrine development within the Alliance. It also leverages the outputs of NATO Agencies and brings coherence to their programs by developing joint doctrine and directing the curricula of NATO's schools and colleges.⁴²

The transformation of NATO's capabilities is comprised of five core processes: Strategic Concepts, Policy and Interoperability (SCPI); Joint Experimentation, Exercises and Assessment (JEEA); Requirements & Capability Planning and Implementation (RCPI); Joint Education and Training (JET); and Future Capabilities Research and Technology (FCRT).⁴³ SCPI serves as the primary conduit for the introduction of joint

⁴¹ "New NATO Transformation Command Established". Available at [<http://www.nato.int/docu/update/2003/06-june/e0618a.htm>]. 12 November 2003.

⁴² "Allied Command Transformation Fact Sheet." Available at [www.nato.int/act]. 12 November 2003.

⁴³ "ACT's Mission." Available at [<http://www.act.nato.int/welcome/mission.html>]. 12 November 2003.

and combined interoperability doctrine and standardization. Through the JEEA process, ACT conducts joint and combined warfighting experiments and evaluates their outcomes for use and implementation throughout the Alliance. RCPI is the process by which ACT identifies requirements and coordinates the development of required capabilities through the NATO Defense Planning Process. Through Joint Education and Training, ACT is responsible for the training of all NATO personnel and headquarters' staffs. Lastly, the Future Capabilities Research and Technology process coordinates NATO research and technology initiatives to support the ongoing transformation of NATO's military capabilities.

In addition to these five key processes in NATO's transformation, three major commands report directly to Allied Command Transformation. The Joint Analysis Lessons Learned Center (JALLC), based in Monsanto, Portugal, is NATO's central agency for the analysis of all NATO military operations, training, experiments and exercises. Analysis requirements will be compiled into a prioritized Bilateral-Strategic Command Analysis Requirements List (ARL) that will be developed in close coordination with NATO commands and agencies. This comprehensive list "will reflect the broad analysis concerns of NATO regarding doctrine, concepts, procedures, structures, organizations, and materiel in order to sustain maximum benefit from analysis activities."⁴⁴ JALLC's pivotal duties will include compiling the lessons learned from each iteration of the NATO Response Force (NRF) and recommending improvements.⁴⁵

Another major command responsible to ACT is the Joint Force Training Center (JFTC). The JFTC is located in Bydgoszcz, Poland, and focuses on joint and combined training at the tactical level in order to achieve tactical interoperability among NATO's militaries.

Lastly, the Joint Warfare Center (JWC) in Stavanger, Norway, promotes and conducts NATO's joint and combined experimentation, analysis and doctrine

⁴⁴ "Allied Command Transformation Fact Sheet." Available at [www.nato.int/act]. 12 November 2003.

⁴⁵ The NATO Response Force (NRF) is NATO's new combined, joint force capable of expeditionary operations. It was officially established 15 October 2003 and will involve different iterations (forces assigned and command responsibilities) every six months. The NRF is the focus of the next section of this chapter.

development in order to “maximize transformational synergy and to improve NATO’s capabilities and interoperability.”⁴⁶ The JWC will assist ACT in the development of new technologies and modeling and simulation, as well as conducting training in the new concepts and doctrine for NATO’s joint and combined staffs.

One of the cornerstones of NATO’s Allied Command Transformation is its collaboration with the United States Joint Forces Command (USJFCOM). In 1999, USJFCOM was established to serve as the lead transformational command within the United States military, and at the Prague Summit in November 2002, NATO took a similar course with the establishment of ACT.⁴⁷ Co-located with USJFCOM headquarters in Norfolk, Virginia, and commanded by the same officer, ACT is expected to fully leverage the transformational gains being made by the United States military and to promote the development of a more cohesive and effective Alliance.

Admiral Edmund Giambastiani, USN, upon assuming command of Joint Forces Command in the fall of 2002, indicated that one of his key objectives involved supporting the transformation of U.S. and Allied capabilities.⁴⁸ This objective has been manifest throughout the U.S. Joint Forces Command’s staff, in which every directorate (training, experimentation, personnel, etc.) has a multinational element. Specifically, the ACT-Joint Forces Command link ensures “that NATO forces are jointly integrated and interoperable with all Alliance forces undergoing transformation.”⁴⁹

For all the dire talk of the “drifting apart” of the Allies in military capability, NATO’s Allied Command Transformation stands out as a tangible example of the cementing and close synchronization of trans-Atlantic military relations and interoperability. NATO describes this link between the lead transformational commands of NATO and the United States as an “institutionalized unity of effort” producing a “synergy” that benefits both commands and, ultimately, both the United States and

⁴⁶ “Allied Command Transformation Fact Sheet.” Available at [www.nato.int/act]. 12 November 2003.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ “NATO-U.S. Joint Forces Collaboration.” Available at [http://www.act.nato.int/transformation/nato-us/nato_us%20index.htm]. 12 November 2003.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

NATO as a whole.⁵⁰ Time will tell to what extent the new Allied Command Transformation proves to be a positive agent for transforming NATO's doctrine and capabilities. Ultimately, of course, NATO's political leaders must ensure the vitality of the Atlantic Alliance, but Allied Command Transformation certainly appears to be a step in the right direction as NATO transforms itself to deal with the new security challenges.

D. THE NATO RESPONSE FORCE: THE VANGUARD OF NATO'S TRANSFORMATION

U.S. Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld first proposed the creation of the NATO Response Force at the September 2002 meeting of NATO defense ministers in Warsaw. The Secretary described the creation of this new force as a concrete way for NATO to transform itself in order to take on a more meaningful role in militarily combating terrorist threats; and he immediately linked its success to the future relevance of NATO as a military organization. Secretary Rumsfeld said that such a force "would be agile, could be deployed rapidly, and would leave a small military presence" and that "establishing rapid reaction forces would be a good way for NATO to assure its relevance going forward into the 21st century."⁵¹ Secretary Rumsfeld envisioned a joint force that would be flexible, interoperable and sustainable. It would draw from a rotational pool of combat forces, and would be able to deploy globally if necessary in order to deal with small-scale contingencies or larger, higher-intensity conflicts.

Less than two months later, at NATO's Prague Summit in November 2002, the Allies approved the creation of the NATO Response Force (NRF). According to the Prague Summit Declaration, the NRF will consist "of a technologically advanced, flexible, deployable, interoperable and sustainable force including land, sea, and air elements ready to move quickly to wherever needed, as decided by the Council."⁵² Additionally, NATO has described the NRF as a "tiered readiness joint force, *expeditionary* in character and design, able to execute the full range of missions."⁵³

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Rumsfeld quoted in indirect discourse in Gerry J. Gilmore, "Rumsfeld: NATO, Like U.S., Needs to Transform Its Military" *American Forces Press Service*, 22 September 2002.

⁵² "Prague Summit Declaration," 21 November 2002, para. 4a. Available at [<http://www.nato.int/docu/pr/2002/p02-127e.htm>]. 15 January 2004.

⁵³ Background briefing on NATO Response Force from the Colorado Springs Defense Ministers Meeting available at [www.nato.int/docu/comm/2003/10-colorado/briefing02.pdf]. 13 November 2003; emphasis in the original.

From its inception, the NATO Response Force became a tangible manifestation of most of NATO's goals in the post-11 September 2001 security environment – from improving NATO's military capabilities to continuing the transformation of the Alliance from a static defensive organization to one capable of responding quickly to threats and challenges distant from NATO territory. According to General James Jones (SACEUR), “the NRF embodies NATO's ongoing transformation and is vital in order to meet the new and very dangerous threats of the 21st century that are so different from those of the Cold War era.”⁵⁴

The NATO Response Force is designed specifically to be NATO's high readiness force certified to meet asymmetrical threats and challenges. According to an official NATO statement,

The NATO Response Force (NRF) will be a coherent, high readiness, joint, multinational force package, technologically advanced, flexible, deployable, interoperable and sustainable. It will be tailored as required to the needs of a specific operation and able to move quickly to wherever needed. The NRF will be able to carry out certain missions on its own, or serve as part of a larger force to contribute to the full range of Alliance military operations.⁵⁵

This force will be based on six-month rotations of committed sea, air, and land forces under the operational control of one of NATO's three operational headquarters under Allied Command Operations (ACO).⁵⁶ ACO at SHAPE is responsible for each NRF creation and force generation while Allied Command Transformation in Norfolk, Virginia, is responsible for the integration of new technologies, doctrine and training for the NRF in addition to determining the “lessons learned” from each NRF iteration and preparing recommendations for further improvements to the Supreme Allied Commander – Operations (SAC-O).

⁵⁴ “NATO Launches Response Force”. Available at [www.nato.int/shape/news/2003/10/i031015.htm]. 21 November 2003.

⁵⁵ “The NATO Response Force: At The Center of NATO Transformation.” Available at [<http://www.nato.int/issues/nrf/index.htm>]. 19 November 2003.

⁵⁶ As noted earlier, the designation “Joint Force Command (JFC)” is a new concept designed in conjunction with the NRF's development. The Joint Force Commanders are the two regional commanders (CINCNORTH based at Allied Forces North in Brunssum, the Netherlands, and CINCSOUTH based at Allied Forces South in Naples, Italy). In addition, the Joint Headquarters West based in Lisbon, Portugal, could also command the NRF.

With much hope and fanfare, the first NATO Response Force (NRF 1) was inaugurated on 15 October 2003 at Joint Force Command North in Brunssum, the Netherlands. At the ceremony, General Sir Jack Deverell (CINCNORTH), stated that the creation of the NRF was “a major step forward in creating the expeditionary capability, essential to countering the globalisation of new threats to peace and security” and that it would lead to a “new, revitalized and relevant Alliance.”⁵⁷ Under his command, the first two iterations (NRF 1 and NRF 2) will serve as the prototype forces during the initial operating phase with full operational capability envisioned for the NRF by the fall of 2006. At full operational capability, the NRF is to be a 20,000-strong combined force that includes a brigade size land element, a joint naval task force, and an air element capable of generating two hundred combat sorties a day.⁵⁸ In addition to these core forces, special operations forces can be augmented into the NRF structure as needed. Each NRF is designed to be able to operate independently for a thirty-day period and longer if re-supplied.

The land component of the NRF will be drawn from high-readiness forces already available to NATO. This brigade-size element will include a mix of light infantry, artillery and air defense support, engineering and reconnaissance units, and psychological operations teams.

The NRF’s air component will provide a rapid deployment capability; and, according to officers on NATO’s International Military Staff, it will be able to conduct “the full range of air tasks using advanced air-to-air and precision guided air-to-surface munitions... and conduct the functions of air defense, air reconnaissance, close air support, air interdiction, combat search and rescue, target acquisition, airborne early warning, and tactical airlift.”⁵⁹ Speaking at the Transatlantic Center of the German Marshall Fund in Brussels in October 2002, General Joseph Ralston, then Supreme Allied

⁵⁷ Deverell quoted in “NATO Launches Response Force.” Available at [www.nato.int/shape/news/2003/10/i031015.htm]. 21 November 2003.

⁵⁸ Background briefing on NATO Response Force from the Colorado Springs Defense Ministers Meeting. Available at [www.nato.int/docu/comm/2003/10-colorado/briefing02.pdf]. 13 November 2003.

⁵⁹ Stephen J. Mariano and Brendan Wilson, “NATO Response Force: Political Deftness, Economic Efficiency, Military Power,” *Strategic Insight*, Center for Contemporary Conflict, U.S. Naval Postgraduate School, 1 April 2003. Available at [<http://www.ccc.nps.navy.mil/rsepResources/si/apr03/europe.asp>]. 13 October 2003.

Commander Europe, described the NRF's air element as being able to make extensive use of "advanced precision munitions, controlled by a joint modern command structure... leveraging information technology to produce near real-time sensor-to-shooter links."⁶⁰

The NRF's maritime element will be comprised of an amphibious task force with requisite air capability (VSTOL aircraft, attack helicopters, etc.), mine counter-measures ships, maritime patrol aircraft, and standing naval forces to include surface warships, submarines and supply vessels. This maritime joint task force will include the command and control capabilities necessary to integrate into joint operations fully.

With all three components together, the NATO Response Force promises to be an entity able to operate across the entire spectrum of conflict and apply force in a rapid and decisive manner. According to a NATO briefing about the NRF published in conjunction with the meeting of NATO Defense Ministers in October 2003,

Initially it's a subset of the NATO Force Structure. Ultimately it *is* the future NATO Force Structure.⁶¹

With so much at stake for the future of NATO in this new force, it must be asked what its central purposes are. According to NATO, the NRF has four main functions. The first is to "provide NATO with a robust and credible high readiness force, which is fully trained and certified as a joint combined force, and is able to deploy quickly to participate in the full spectrum of NATO missions."⁶² One key issue addressed in this stated purpose, and worth drawing out for further discussion, is that the NRF is NATO's first truly *joint* warfighting unit. While NATO has been prepared to conduct combined (multinational) operations for decades and has possessed for many years "high readiness forces," this is the first standing force in NATO's history that is truly integrated among the three main warfare components of sea, air, and land. As General James Jones (SACEUR) stated in October 2003, "For the first time in its history, the Alliance will have a joint ... combined air, land, sea and special operations force under a single

⁶⁰ Ralston quoted in Nicholas Fiorenza, "NATO's New Teeth," *Armed Forces Journal*, April 2003, p. 16.

⁶¹ Background briefing on NATO Response Force from the Colorado Springs Defense Ministers Meeting. Available at [www.nato.int/docu/comm/2003/10-colorado/briefing02.pdf]. 13 November 2003; emphasis in the original.

⁶² Background briefing on NATO Response Force from the Colorado Springs Defense Ministers Meeting. Available at [www.nato.int/docu/comm/2003/10-colorado/briefing02.pdf]. 13 November 2003.

commander, maintained as a standing rotational force.”⁶³ Due to its ability to conduct operations as part of the war on terrorism, the NRF is seen as a crucial element in NATO’s transformation and future effectiveness.

The second stated purpose of the NRF is to “act as a catalyst for collective allied focus on capability development.”⁶⁴ Some authoritative observers of NATO affairs argue that this purpose of enhancing “collective allied focus” may be the most important legacy of the NRF. After the bruising debate among the Allies in the months prior to the U.S.-led military intervention in Iraq and in view of lingering doubts in some circles regarding NATO’s future relevance as an effective military organization, the NRF is seen as a constructive project on which the Allies can focus in a concerted effort. An official statement from the Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe (SHAPE) in October 2003 stated that the NRF was “dynamic evidence of NATO member states’ commitment to transformation and revitalization of the Alliance.”⁶⁵

A critical mechanism in the NRF’s development is the Allied Command Transformation. As part of each NRF iteration, the ACT will examine the effectiveness and shortfalls of each NRF and recommend changes to doctrine and other tangible improvements. This “feedback loop” is viewed as a critical factor in producing a NATO force of not only proven efficacy but also an instrument for integrated transformation and improved interoperability within the Alliance. If this process is successful, the threat of a trans-Atlantic disconnect in military capability and interoperability can be greatly diminished.

⁶³ Jones quoted in “NATO Launches Response Force.” Available at [www.nato.int/shape/news/2003/10/i031015.htm]. 21 November 2003.

⁶⁴ Background briefing on NATO Response Force from the Colorado Springs Defense Ministers Meeting. Available at [www.nato.int/docu/comm/2003/10-colorado/briefing02.pdf]. 13 November 2003.

⁶⁵ “NRF-Force for the Future Bullet Highlights.” Available at [http://www.nato.int/shape/issues/shape_nrf/nrff.htm]. 21 November 2003.

The third purpose of the NRF is “to act as the engine for providing the Alliance with an expeditionary capability.”⁶⁶ As stated earlier in this chapter, NATO’s leaders have declared that the “theological squabbles”⁶⁷ over NATO operating beyond Europe are long over; yet, there are still obvious deficiencies in NATO’s ability to act in an expeditionary manner. The NRF is designed specially to remedy shortfalls in expeditionary capability. The NATO Response Force includes platforms providing strategic lift by land, air and sea. In addition, the official designation of the NRF headquarters’ element is “Deployable Joint Task Force Headquarters,” signifying the importance of the NRF’s expeditionary component.

The final official purpose for the NRF is to “act as a medium for longer term capability development in tandem with the Prague Capabilities Commitment.”⁶⁸ The previous section of this chapter identified key elements for capabilities improvement within NATO. The NRF is designed in large part to be a “catalyst for focusing on and promoting improvements of Alliance military capabilities, in very close relationship with the national and multinational elements of the Prague Capabilities Commitment (PCC).”⁶⁹ The long range planning for the NATO Response Force lays out specific capabilities requirements, per the guidelines defined in the PCC, in such critical areas as precision guided munitions (PGM) availability.

NATO’s political-military authorities thereby enunciate tangible capability requirements to future participants in NRF rotations and lead NATO in the improvement of its capabilities. The main instrument in coordinating the NRF with the PCC is the Combined Joint Statement of Requirement (CJSOR), which is produced by Allied Command Operations (ACO) at SHAPE with inputs from Allied Command Transformation and the regional Joint Force Commanders, with ultimate approval by the

⁶⁶ Background briefing on NATO Response Force from the Colorado Springs Defense Ministers Meeting. Available at [www.nato.int/docu/comm/2003/10-colorado/briefing02.pdf]. 13 November 2003.

⁶⁷ “NATO Secretary-General Lord Robertson’s Speech at the Atlantic Treaty Association’s 49th General Assembly.” Available at [<http://www.nato.int/docu/speech/2003/s031107a.htm>]. 15 January 2004.

⁶⁸ Background briefing on NATO Response Force from the Colorado Springs Defense Ministers Meeting. Available at [www.nato.int/docu/comm/2003/10-colorado/briefing02.pdf]. 13 November 2003.

⁶⁹ “The NATO Response Force: At the Center of NATO Transformation.” Available at [www.nato.int/issues/nrf/index.htm]. 19 November 2003.

NATO Military Committee. The purpose of the CJSOR is to provide nations with an indication of the type and scale of forces and capabilities required for the NATO Response Force. Through the CJSOR process, NATO will be able to identify and obtain the capabilities necessary to conduct various missions.

The kinds of missions that the NRF may be expected to execute vary across a wide spectrum of conflict. These missions, according to NATO sources, include crisis response and peacekeeping, consequence management (including humanitarian crises and responding to attacks using weapons of mass destruction), peace enforcement, non-combatant evacuation operations, and embargo operations (maritime, land, and air), including the enforcement of no-fly zones. In addition to these traditional “low-intensity conflict” operations, other possible NRF missions include support to counter terror operations, use as an initial entry force, and lastly, employment as a demonstrative force package that could rapidly deploy as a show of force to deter aggression.⁷⁰

The NATO Response Force continues to develop into one of the key vehicles for NATO’s transformation for the new security environment. The first NATO exercises involving NRF staff and operational elements took place less than three weeks after the establishment of the first NRF on 15 October 2003. Exercise Allied Action 2003 was a NATO Command Post Exercise that took place in Istanbul, Turkey, from 2-18 November 2003. It was conducted by Regional Headquarters Allied Forces Northern Europe (AFNORTH)⁷¹ and served to validate AFNORTH as a operational level headquarters capable of organizing and commanding a fully deployable Combined Joint Task Force (CJTF).⁷² The participants in this exercise practiced the procedures for planning and mounting a multinational crisis response operation beyond Alliance territory.⁷³ This staff exercise was followed by the first NATO Response Force exercise, which was conducted at Doganbey, Turkey, on 20 November 2003. Exercise Allied Response 2003 highlighted capabilities of the NRF in a field-training scenario portraying a NATO-led

⁷⁰ Background briefing on NATO Response Force from the Colorado Springs Defense Ministers Meeting. Available at [www.nato.int/docu/comm/2003/10-colorado/briefing02.pdf]. 13 November 2003.

⁷¹ Both RHQ AFNORTH and JFC NORTH are commonly used to denote the same command.

⁷² AFNORTH’s permanent headquarters is located in Brunssum, the Netherlands.

⁷³ “NATO Conducts Combined Joint Task Force Exercise in Turkey.” Available at [www.afnorth.int/AA03/Allied%20Action.htm]. 22 November 2003.

crisis response operation beyond NATO's area of responsibility. The exercise depicted the NRF conducting maritime presence, show of force, counter-terrorism, and noncombatant evacuation and embargo operations.⁷⁴ This was quite impressive considering that it was only a year prior to this exercise that the NRF concept was first adopted.

For forty years, from 1949 to 1989, NATO forces organized, trained, and equipped mainly to deter and defeat (if necessary) military aggression on the European continent. Since the early 1990's, the Allies have been adapting their capabilities and concepts of operations to conduct crisis response and peacekeeping activities. Since the late 1990's, and particularly since the terrorist attacks against the United States in September 2001, the Allies have been carrying forward the process of adaptation and transformation to deal with new threats and challenges. Since terrorist and WMD proliferation threats to the Atlantic Alliance may arise around the globe, NATO's challenge is to field expeditionary forces capable of speed, power, and interoperability to counter such threats. The NATO Response Force, if brought to its full potential, is capable of meeting such a challenge.

⁷⁴ "First NATO Response Force Exercise at Doganbey, Turkey November 20, 2003," Available at www.afnorth.int/NRF/Doganbey.htm. 22 November 2003.

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III. TRANS-ATLANTIC OBSTACLES TO NATO'S ACTIVE AND EFFECTIVE PARTICIPATION IN THE GLOBAL WAR ON TERRORISM

A. INTRODUCTION: 9/11 AND THE DEBATE OVER NATO'S FUTURE COURSE

NATO's shift in strategic focus, the reorganization of the NATO military command structure, and the establishment of the NATO Response Force constitute a significant turning point in the history of the Atlantic Alliance. NATO's stated objectives in combating the global terrorist threat are both impressive and visionary. However, serious obstacles must be effectively addressed for NATO to fully realize its objectives in the global war on terrorism.

These obstacles have both political and military dimensions. In the political sphere, serious debate persists over how global a role NATO should have. Considerable differences over preventive and preemptive options among NATO members could undermine NATO's effectiveness in the war on terrorism. Moreover, NATO's military capability is of critical importance to achieving its objectives. NATO's vision for combating terrorism relies on a robust expeditionary capability; yet it is imperative that NATO substantially improve its military capabilities to satisfy such requirements.

B. THE POLITICAL COMPONENT: TRANS-ATLANTIC STRAINS AS OBSTACLES TO NATO'S WILLINGNESS AND POLITICAL EFFICACY TOWARD AN INCREASED GLOBAL ROLE

The debate about an increased global role for NATO did not materialize after 11 September 2001. Former U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher and former Secretary of Defense William Perry argued as follows in October 1997:

Shifting the alliance's emphasis from defense of members' territory to defense of common interests is the strategic imperative. These threats include the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, disruption of the flow of oil, terrorism, genocidal violence and wars of aggression in other regions that threaten to create great disruption. To deal with such threats,

alliance members need to have a way to rapidly form military coalitions that can accomplish goals beyond NATO territory.... For NATO to succeed, it must develop the ability to respond to today's security needs.⁷⁵

The European members of NATO historically received such proposals with caution. David S. Yost wrote in 1998 that many of the European allies viewed the idea of a NATO with global missions negatively. Yost described how Europeans

generally find more difficulties than advantages in the 'global NATO' concept. In their view, attempting to institutionalize global security functions in NATO might well prove to be counterproductive and damaging to Alliance cohesion and to the maintenance of U.S. leadership in the Alliance.⁷⁶

For example, in 1997 Michael Rühle and Nick Williams wrote as follows on this topic:

[A]n attempt to rally the European allies into quasi-automatic action on the global stage is bound to fail... [O]ne would be hard-pressed to come up with scenarios which would suggest joint military action of all 16 NATO allies outside Europe.⁷⁷

Many would contend that the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001 constitute precisely the scenario one would normally be "hard pressed to come up with." Yet while it can be argued that those attacks constituted a watershed event with the requisite power and momentum to bring about changes in NATO's doctrine, many contend that the national security policy of the United States since September 2001 has led to a squandering of European goodwill. This is due in large measure to the unease in much of Europe concerning the American doctrine of preemption. The following policy statement summarizes the U.S. strategic doctrine of preemption:

Given the goals of rogue states and terrorists, the United States can no longer solely rely on a reactive posture as we have in the past. The inability to deter a potential attacker, the immediacy of today's threats, and the magnitude of potential harm that could be caused by our adversaries' choice of weapons, do not permit that option... The United

⁷⁵ Christopher and Perry, "NATO's True Mission," *New York Times*, 21 October 1997, quoted in David S. Yost, *NATO Transformed: The Alliance's New Roles in International Security* (Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace Press, 1998), p. 243.

⁷⁶ Ibid., p. 224.

⁷⁷ Michael Rühle and Nick Williams, "Why NATO Will Survive," *Comparative Strategy*, vol. 16 (January / March 1997), p. 112, quoted in David S. Yost, *NATO Transformed*, p. 245.

States has long maintained the option of preemptive actions to counter a sufficient threat to our national security. The greater the threat, the greater is the risk of inaction – and the more compelling the case for taking anticipatory action to defend ourselves, even if uncertainty remains as to the time and place of the enemy’s attack. To forestall or prevent such hostile acts by our adversaries, the United States will, if necessary, act preemptively.⁷⁸

This new doctrine, which has come to be known as the Bush Doctrine, has contributed to a surge in trans-Atlantic tensions.⁷⁹ Many Europeans (and others) argue that such a policy threatens international security and world order. Since NATO is an intergovernmental organization based on consensus as the foundation for any action, such tensions could become a serious obstacle to NATO’s future willingness to undertake an increased global role.

Perhaps nowhere has this strain been more evident than in the political and diplomatic wrangling leading to the U.S.-led intervention in Iraq in March-April 2003. The determination of fellow NATO allies France and Germany to block U.S. action caused significant damage in the relationship with America. The criticisms expressed by some members of German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder’s government about the policies of U.S. President George W. Bush resulted in a “poisoned atmosphere” in the German-American relationship, according to U.S. National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice.⁸⁰ The stoking of these emotions could lead to fracture within an alliance based on common interests, goals, and values. NATO Secretary-General Lord Robertson commented on this phenomenon in May 2003:

I’m very worried about anti-Americanism because I think it is deeply corrosive to a relationship that is critically important for the overall security of the world. If they [the United States] continue to be criticized in that unreasoning and emotive way, then I see disengagement being the

⁷⁸ *National Security Strategy of the United States of America* (Washington, D.C.: The White House, September 2002), p. 15.

⁷⁹ For a description of the development of the Bush Doctrine, please see *Frontline*’s “The War Behind Closed Doors.” Available at [<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/iraq/etc/cron.html>]. 13 May 2003.

⁸⁰ Condoleezza Rice quoted in *Financial Times Deutschland*, 21 September 2002. Available at [http://www.dw-world.de/english/0,3367,1432_A_641595,00.html]. 13 May 2003.

outcome and that being much more dangerous to all of us than American involvement or interventionism... It is a generic attack on America and American standards and American values and approaches.⁸¹

Many have argued that French foreign policy under President Jacques Chirac is largely based on countering increasing American power on the world stage and particularly in Europe. This took the form of active opposition to United States policy on the Iraq question and, according to Stefan Kornelius, the “forging of an entente directed against the United States.”⁸² Many in France have come to view the United States as “*l’hyperpuissance américaine*” – the American hyperpower – that must be countered by France. Marcel H. van Herpen, director of the pro-EU Cicero Foundation, cogently explained French policy as being characterized by three core assumptions: France considers itself a pivotal great power; France can only play this role in a multipolar world; and France considers multilateral decision-making in such a world the best guarantee of international security.⁸³

Van Herpen explains that this is why France favors a strong role for international forums, particularly the United Nations Security Council, of which it is a permanent member. By enhancing this multilateral institution, it is argued, France will not only promote multipolarity but also confirm its status as a world power. This policy, according to van Herpen, will only be solidified in the coming years under Chirac. Now enjoying greater domestic political leverage, Chirac can

do what he already long ago decided to do: to systemically oppose American power in order to create a second, countervailing power. In this strategy, he considers Germany and some [economically] smaller European states, including Russia, and possibly China, to be his natural allies.⁸⁴

⁸¹ NATO Secretary-General Lord Robertson quoted in “NATO Chief Worried About Anti-Americanism,” *Toronto Star*, 11 May 2003.

⁸² Stefan Kornelius, “In War’s Aftermath: The Transatlantic Relationship,” *In the National Interest*, 14 May 2003.

⁸³ Marcel H. Van Herpen, “France: Champion of the Multipolar World,” *In the National Interest*, 14 May 2003.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

It seems that one can add India to the list of countries that some French officials would like to recruit in their campaign for multipolarity. According to the *Times of India*, during a visit to New Delhi in April 2003, French Defense Minister Michèle Alliot-Marie, a close political confidante of the French President, indicated that countries with “a similar vision” of an international order based on multipolarity should come together to act as a counterweight against the perceived unilateralist policies of the United States in international affairs.⁸⁵ Such references to a “multipolar” world by French officials illustrate their desire to check the perceived preponderance of American power.

If France was successful in persuading its fellow members of the European Union to reduce their military dependence on the United States and to pursue policies at variance with those favored by Washington, this could undermine U.S. influence globally and within NATO in particular. Such diplomatic discord could obstruct NATO’s movement toward playing a more global role against the terrorist threat. Alain Madelin, a member of the French Parliament and a former cabinet minister under Chirac, delivered his perspective on France’s foreign policy vis-à-vis the United States in compelling terms in a speech in Washington, D.C.:

Today, you should know that France’s foreign policy crystallizes all the anti-American tendencies of the French society. A part of the French population is jealous and resentful of American power. Anti-Americanism is a flag for those who lost their flag. This anti-Americanism is put forth by the orphans of Marxism... Finally, there is the nostalgia for the Gaullist posture and the idea that the only way to recover international standing is for France and Europe to oppose the United States.⁸⁶

If there was any doubt about the seriousness of such aspirations, it was removed on 19 April 2003 when the leaders of Belgium, France, Germany, and Luxembourg announced the establishment of a “European Security and Defense Union.” Many have dismissed this summit as both feckless and reckless, but the underlying message was widely seen as an intention to weaken the trans-Atlantic security relationship. The

⁸⁵ Michèle Alliot-Marie quoted in “French Minister Asks India to Join Hands Against America,” *Times of India*, 29 April 2003.

⁸⁶ Alain Madelin, “For A New Alliance,” *Heritage Lectures*, vol. 788, Delivered 4 April 2003 (Washington, D.C.: The Heritage Foundation, 16 May 2003).

declared intention was to establish a “multinational deployable force headquarters” and a “nucleus of collective capability for planning and conducting operations for the European Union.”⁸⁷ While the four leaders repeatedly stated that their initiative was not in opposition to NATO, the functions proposed would duplicate those of NATO. Robert Greene wrote that it could only mean one thing: “France, having seen the UN Security Council sidelined in Iraq, has decided it needs a serious military alliance, not a talking shop, to stand up to America.”⁸⁸ This drew a strong response from the U.S. Ambassador to NATO, Nicholas Burns:

Some Europeans...think they can create a unified continental foreign policy with opposition to the United States as its *raison d'être*. They call for European-only military headquarters that would needlessly duplicate what NATO already offers and have zero real utility, unless the objective is to weaken our ability to work together. Their vision of Europe as a countervailing power to the United States is one that would destroy the cooperative spirit that has held us together in NATO.⁸⁹

The United States made clear that it would not soon forget the division within the Alliance. In April 2003, Secretary of State Colin Powell stated, “We have to look at all aspects of our relationship with France in light of this.”⁹⁰ These developments could seriously damage the Alliance and no doubt some damage has already been done. Speaking in Berlin in June 2003, NATO Secretary-General Robertson admitted that damage to the Atlantic Alliance had indeed occurred during the debate leading up to the U.S.-led intervention in Iraq in 2003. Yet in Robertson’s view such damage “was superficial, above the waterline.”⁹¹ It is important that the repairs to the damage be successful and durable.

⁸⁷ John Vinocur, “Anti-War Powers to Join Forces,” *International Herald Tribune*, 30 April 2003.

⁸⁸ Robert Lane Greene, “Axis of Unfeasible,” *The New Republic Online*, available only at TNR Online, (Post Date 6 May 2003, available at [www.tnr.com]).

⁸⁹ Nicholas Burns, “NATO Has Adapted: An Alliance with A New Mission,” *International Herald Tribune*, 24 May 2003.

⁹⁰ Powell quoted by MSNBC News, 23 April 2002. Available at [<http://www.msnbc.com/news/888057.asp?0cv=CB10>]. 13 May 2003.

⁹¹ “The West After Iraq: Are The Security Strategies of the U.S. and Europe Still Compatible?” Speech by NATO Secretary-General Lord Robertson to the BMVG-FAZ Forum; (Berlin: 24 June 2003). Available at [<http://www.nato.int/docu/speech/2003/s030624a.htm>]. 04 February 2004.

It should be noted that well before the tension in 2002-2003 over the U.S.-led military action in Iraq, the idea that NATO could initiate offensive military operations against WMD proliferants was considered unrealistic. Writing in 1994, Michael Rühle described the magnitude of the obstacles to such action:

NATO, given its democratic, multinational, and defensive nature, is incapable of any deliberately planned offensive action... [I]t is simply inconceivable that NATO Allies would find the political will to launch a preventive military strike even against the facilities of a state which persisted in its development of WMD in the light of international opposition.⁹²

In light of the trans-Atlantic tensions manifested during the debate prior to the U.S.-led intervention in Iraq and the failure to date to find stockpiles of WMD within Iraq, it remains uncertain whether NATO will ever be willing to adopt a policy of preventive action. This implies that NATO is more likely to contribute to the war on terrorism in areas such as post-conflict security-building.

C. THE MILITARY COMPONENT: THE TRANS-ATLANTIC CAPABILITIES GAP AS AN OBSTACLE TO NATO'S EFFECTIVENESS IN AN INCREASED GLOBAL ROLE

America's European allies must now begin to meet their commitments to address rapidly the alarming imbalances in airlift, precision-guided munitions, air-to-air refueling, and secure communications. Without these capabilities, most European nations will not, in the future, be able to meaningfully contribute to modern military operations, making hollow any plans for a serious European-American security partnership.⁹³

Nicholas Burns, U.S. Ambassador to NATO, 24 May 2003

Even if the Allies overcome their current divisions and provide the necessary political leadership and support for a significant role in the global struggle against terrorism, it will be for naught if NATO continues to lack the military capability to assume the requisite increased global role effectively. As Secretary-General Lord Robertson said to the Council on Foreign Relations in April 2002:

⁹² Michael Rühle, "NATO and the Coming Proliferation Threat," *Comparative Strategy*, vol. 13 (July – September 1994), pp. 317-318, quoted in David S. Yost, *NATO Transformed: The Alliance's New Roles in International Security* (Washington, D.C.: United States Institute for Peace Press, 1998), pp. 245-246.

⁹³ Nicholas Burns, "NATO Has Adapted: An Alliance with A New Mission," *International Herald Tribune*, 24 May 2003.

By invoking Article V of the Washington Treaty, NATO gave a warning to terrorists that they had crossed an unacceptable threshold. We must now back up that warning by ensuring that our forces have the evident capability to strike at these terrorists and their sponsors. And we must stop those who are proliferating the weapons of mass destruction that pose the most serious risk.⁹⁴

The much-discussed military capabilities gap between the United States and its European and Canadian allies matters in this debate regarding NATO and the war on terrorism since it is a significant obstacle to NATO's future effectiveness – particularly if NATO is to play an increased global role.

Like the debate on a global role for NATO, this topic was an issue within the Alliance well before Article 5 was invoked on 12 September 2001. The general consensus is that the United States has surged ahead of its European allies in technology investment, C4ISR,⁹⁵ strategic air and sealift, secure communications, and deep strike capabilities – all necessary and critical elements of an effective power projection force. While many components constitute this gap,

The United States is currently superior to any combination of its European allies in its ability to plan, conduct and sustain theater-wide expeditionary operations. Of all the NATO allies, only the United States can project power in the form of large-scale long-range non-nuclear air and missile strikes at great distances from its homeland.⁹⁶

This disparity was manifest in NATO's air campaign in the Kosovo conflict – Operation Allied Force. During this conflict, the United States delivered over 80% of the weapons, even though non-U.S. aircraft carried out 39% of all sorties. The strike sorties non-U.S. aircraft executed could not have taken place without crucial American support aircraft. Many of the key capabilities for Operation Allied Force (SEAD,⁹⁷ airborne command and control, electronic warfare, all-weather targeting, and time sensitive

⁹⁴ Quoted from Secretary-General Lord Robertson's speech to the Council on Foreign Relations on 10 April 2002. Available at [www.nato.int/docu/speech/2002/s020410a.htm]. 02 February 2004.

⁹⁵ Command, Control, Communications, Computers, Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance.

⁹⁶ David S. Yost, "The NATO Capabilities Gap and the European Union," *Survival*, Vol. 42 (Winter 2000-2001), pp. 98-99.

⁹⁷ Suppression of Enemy Air Defenses.

targeting) were handled almost entirely by U.S. forces.⁹⁸ In addition to these gaps, the importance of expeditionary capability was another key lesson learned from Operation Allied Force. Lieutenant Colonel Michael Lamb, USAF, observes that

Operation Allied Force demonstrated that the United States and its allies have very different levels of expeditionary capability and strategic lift. The United States provided almost all of the dedicated military air and sealift used during the campaign. It was clear that the United States had a distinct advantage in many areas of expeditionary capability.⁹⁹

Such a gap in expeditionary capability for operations within Europe demonstrates the severe limitations on any ambitions for future global operations.

The same capabilities lacking in Operation Allied Force are exponentially more essential to combat and coalition effectiveness in a war involving the asymmetric challenges posed by terrorism. A war against terrorists, or against state regimes with actual or possible WMD capabilities, relies heavily on precise intelligence, highly trained and professional personnel, advanced technology and modern, integrated platforms. An initial look at national levels of defense spending causes the United States and its European and Canadian allies to appear as if they were not even in the same alliance. The United States' increase in defense spending of \$48 billion for 2003 was larger than any other NATO ally's total defense budget for that year.¹⁰⁰ In the arena of investing in new capabilities, Europe spent \$10 billion on military research and development while the United States spent \$50 billion in Fiscal Year (FY) 2003.¹⁰¹ In response to this growing capabilities gap between the United States and its NATO Allies, one German official has said, "At this rate, we won't be able to communicate with you [the United States], much less fight alongside you."¹⁰² It should also be noted that if prosperous long-standing NATO members such as Britain, France, and Germany are having

⁹⁸ Ibid., p. 103.

⁹⁹ Michael W. Lamb, "Operation Allied Force: Golden Nuggets for Future Campaigns," *The Maxwell Papers*, vol. 27 (Montgomery, AL: Air University Press, August 2002), p. 23.

¹⁰⁰ Phillip H. Gordon, "Reforging the Atlantic Alliance," *The National Interest*, no. 69 (Fall 2002), p. 92.

¹⁰¹ François Heisbourg, "Europe's Military Revolution," *Joint Force Quarterly*, no. 30 (Spring 2002), p. 32.

¹⁰² Joseph Fitchett, "Pentagon in a League of Its Own," *International Herald Tribune*, 4 February 2002.

difficulty keeping up with U.S. defense expenditures as a percentage of GNP, then it can only be expected that the new members, who are already at an economic disadvantage, will be faced with an even more difficult, if not impossible, task in meeting NATO's stated goals of increasing its capabilities.

One of the most troubling components of the capabilities gap concerns interoperability and information sharing. U.S. forces increasingly rely on the SIPRNET¹⁰³ for communications in nearly every facet of combat operations, including intelligence and targeting information, logistics, and plans and schedules. This secure means of coordination and information sharing is classified "SECRET NOFORN" – that is, no access or release to foreign nationals is permitted – and, while it has proven a boon to U.S. combat capability, it remains a critical obstacle to interoperability between the United States and its NATO allies.

Many would counter that the lack of interoperability is not such a grave issue due to NATO's information sharing capability in the LOCE system.¹⁰⁴ However, this system is limited by both low bandwidth capability and the fact that not all U.S. forces are equipped with LOCE connectivity. This was demonstrated vividly during Operation Enduring Freedom. Most U.S. naval forces based on the east coast of the United States are equipped with LOCE due to the frequency of NATO-sponsored joint exercises involving those units. U.S. naval forces operating out of the Pacific are generally not equipped with LOCE since they do not participate in NATO exercises. During Operation Enduring Freedom, Pacific-based carrier battle groups were not able to communicate via LOCE to other coalition forces.¹⁰⁵ This situation reflects what François Heisbourg, director of the Paris-based Foundation for Strategic Research, said when he described

¹⁰³ SIPRNET: Secret Internet Protocol Router Network

¹⁰⁴ LOCE: Linked Operations-Intelligence Centers Europe. "The LOCE system supports combined intelligence operations by connecting users at all echelons, from the national ministry of defense to the tactical level." LOCE is a communications system that allows the transmission of NATO SECRET material. It serves as U.S. European Command's "intelligence system for coalition warfare... It supports I&W [Indications and Warning], current intelligence, collection management, and most aspects of the targeting cycle including nominations, air tasking orders, and battle damage assessments. It also provides the TBM [theater ballistic missile] data architecture supporting shared early warning among NATO and theater components." (Source: Federation of American Scientists accessed at: <http://www.fas.org/irp/program/disseminate/loce.htm>). 09 May 2003.

¹⁰⁵ The author served on the intelligence staff of Commander, Task Force 50 onboard the USS CARL VINSON during Operation Enduring Freedom from 11 September 2001 to 18 December 2001. CTF-50 was the overall afloat commander for all U.S. and coalition naval forces in Operation Enduring Freedom.

shortcomings in NATO interoperability as a major obstacle to an increased global mission, notably because of what he called “increasing disengagement” from NATO by the United States, for various reasons.

These include the end of the Cold War and the corresponding relegation in importance of the European theater of operations; the increasingly autonomous nature of US theater commands, most of which – PACOM, CENTCOM, NORTHCOM, SOUTHCOM – are not accustomed to NATO procedures, standards and norms; and of course, the growing capabilities gap between Europe and the United States, with its growing impact on European militaries’ ability to interface fully with their US counterparts. With some 92 percent of the US force structure outside NATO, what will be the future meaning of NATO interoperability?¹⁰⁶

Serious military reform is indeed necessary not only in interoperability and weapons capability, but in the force structure itself. With some rare exceptions, most NATO European armed forces are still designed to fight the continental land battle dreaded during the Cold War. These European allies continue to maintain forces laden with unnecessary personnel, composed largely of conscripts that possess little ability for complex global operations. As Secretary-General Lord Robertson stated in Moscow on 9 December 2002:

The military forces of yesterday – huge arsenals of battle tanks, static headquarters and inflexible soldiers -- are not only useless in meeting these new threats [of terrorism]; but they also divert scarce defense resources away from urgent and pressing modernization.¹⁰⁷

While there remains wasteful and inefficient use of national defense funding in needless and duplicative efforts, this unnecessary allocation of manpower serves as a costly encumbrance to already constrained national defense budgets. As François Heisbourg has pointed out:

the single most important cause of the massive discrepancy between the US and European capabilities flows from European force structure policies... Indeed, the Europeans reign supreme in one area, that of

¹⁰⁶ Steve Larrabee & François Heisbourg, “How Global A Role Can and Should NATO Play?” *NATO Review*, Spring 2003. Available at [www.nato.int/docu/review/2003/issue1/english/debate.html]. 13 May 2003.

¹⁰⁷ Transforming the Military to Fight Terrorism. Meetings between NATO Secretary-General Lord Robertson and Russian Officials. Available at [www.nato.int/docu/update/2002/12-december/e1209a.htm]. 13 May 2003.

unusable and ultimately unaffordable manpower. The forces of the European Union countries field 1.9 million under uniform versus 1.4 million in the US... The net effect is that after spending for the corresponding force structures, there is little left for European R&D [research and development], acquisition or for O&M [operations and maintenance] spending.¹⁰⁸

Overcoming this disparity in trans-Atlantic military capabilities will certainly be a vast task. Improvements in capabilities must include the critical areas of chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear defense; intelligence, surveillance and target acquisition; air-to-ground surveillance; command, control and communications; precision guided munitions and suppression of enemy air defenses (SEAD); strategic air and sea lift; air-to-air refueling; and deployable combat support and combat service support units. If the capabilities gap between the United States and the other NATO allies continues to grow, it will undermine the Alliance as an effective and interoperable defense organization.

This gap in military capabilities, coupled with the trans-Atlantic obstacles heretofore discussed, poses vexing problems for the Atlantic Alliance as it struggles to find its place in the campaign against the global terrorist threat. These obstacles are not insurmountable, and they must be effectively addressed and overcome in order for NATO to be a truly effective participant in the global war on terrorism.

¹⁰⁸ François Heisbourg, "Emerging European Power Projection Capabilities," paper presented at the Joint RAND and GCSP Workshop, "NATO's New Strategic Concept and the Peripheral Contingencies: The Middle East," Geneva, 15-16 July 1999, quoted in David S. Yost, "The NATO Capabilities Gap and the European Union," *Survival*, Vol. 42 (Winter 2000-2001), p. 100.

IV. CONCLUSION

The terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001 not only dramatically altered U.S. national security policy, they also fundamentally changed the strategic focus of NATO. They constituted, in essence, a necessary wake-up call for the Atlantic Alliance. The terrorist attacks demonstrated that the primary immediate threat to peace and security in both Europe and North America originates beyond NATO's traditional area of responsibility; and a NATO still laden to a significant extent with a Cold War-era military infrastructure can do little to contribute to combating this new strategic threat. A substantially transformed NATO is clearly required in order to effectively counter such threats and actively participate in the new global war on terrorism. Such a transformation of NATO will have the added effect of ensuring its relevance in countering the asymmetric threats of terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

In introducing the U.S. National Security Strategy, released in September 2002, President George W. Bush declared that "the gravest danger our Nation faces lies at the crossroads of radicalism and technology" and that "History will judge harshly those who saw this coming danger but failed to act."¹⁰⁹ NATO has largely answered this challenge to act by transforming itself with the purpose of effectively countering this nexus of "radicalism and technology" wherever such a threat may arise. In short, the era of a global NATO has arrived.

With the attacks of 11 September 2001 still vivid in memory, and the growing threat emanating from beyond Europe becoming more real, NATO's leaders, in the Prague Summit Declaration issued on 21 November 2002, categorically rejected and condemned terrorism in all its forms and recognized that it "poses a grave and growing threat to Alliance populations, forces and territory, as well as to international security; and we are determined to combat this scourge for as long as necessary. To combat terrorism effectively, our response must be multi-faceted and comprehensive."¹¹⁰ While

¹⁰⁹ The National Security Strategy of the United States of America (Washington, D.C.: The White House, 17 September 2002). This passage is found on the President's cover letter.

¹¹⁰ NATO Prague Summit Declaration – Issued by the Heads of State and Government participating in the meeting of the North Atlantic Council in Prague on 21 November 2002; para. 4d. Available at [<http://www.nato.int/docu/pr/2002/p02-127e.htm>]. 22 November 2003.

these words are promising, acting on them will entail meeting today's terrorist threat with as unified a strategic response as the Allies mustered against the threat posed by the Soviet Union.

NATO has begun to respond to the terrorist threat by dramatically shifting its strategic focus toward a more deployable and flexible force posture. This shift in strategic focus has been manifested in NATO's Military Concept for Defense Against Terrorism, its undertaking of command responsibilities in Afghanistan, and the dramatic streamlining of its integrated military command structure. NATO has also established a framework for transforming its military capabilities through the Prague Capabilities Commitment and Allied Command Transformation. These represent tangible commitments designed to ensure continued interoperability and cohesion within the Atlantic Alliance. Lastly, the NATO Response Force is considered a major step toward NATO's transformation to an alliance capable of conducting joint warfare on a global scale, and it has been heralded as the primary instrument for NATO operations in the future.

Yet even with recognition of the growing need for NATO to play a global role to combat the threats posed by terrorism, serious political obstacles for NATO to be truly effective in this new era persist. Growing anti-Americanism, due in large part to perceived unilateralism on the part of the United States, has encouraged those who believe that the European Union must now chart its own course and be responsible for its own security, without any assistance from the United States. This attitude may further undermine the trust and cooperation necessary for continued Allied cohesion.

The European Union's senior military officer, General Gustav Hagglund, recently suggested that "American and European forces should be responsible for their own territorial defence and only cooperate on major crises outside their regions."¹¹¹ While General Hagglund was not speaking for the European Union or for his own country, Finland, which is not a NATO member, such sentiments could nonetheless ultimately undermine the foundations of NATO if they became widely shared. Indeed, such

¹¹¹ Peter Starck, "Time Europe Defended Itself – EU Military Official," Reuters Foundation AlertNet; 18 January 2004. Available at <http://www.alertnet.org/thenews/newsdesk/STA853854.htm>. 20 January 2004. General Hagglund is the Chairman of the European Union's Military Committee.

sentiments could, if taken to their logical conclusion, lead to a termination of the Atlantic Alliance, which is based on the mutual defense pledge in Article 5 of the 1949 Washington Treaty.

In addition to the political obstacles that must be overcome, the challenge of enhancing the capabilities of NATO forces is exacerbated by the low level of domestic support for military expenditures in Canada and most of NATO Europe. With few exceptions (e.g., France and the United Kingdom), most NATO nations have demonstrated little enthusiasm for increased defense budgets, and in times of economic uncertainty defense budgets are usually cut before social programs and other entitlements.

To counter this tendency, in the Prague Capabilities Commitment NATO governments have made politically binding pledges to acquire specific operational assets. NATO member nations understand that they must transform their military force structures in order to provide a more efficient pool of well-trained and properly equipped personnel. These nations also have a clear responsibility to convince their publics of the importance of the Alliance's increasingly global role and the necessary contribution required for such missions.

To ensure the continued success and vitality of NATO, leaders on both sides of the Atlantic must strive to keep it in a place of unquestioned primacy as the foundation for security in the Euro-Atlantic region. Cooperation must replace antagonism, and common security interests must overcome disagreements over policy. Too much is at stake for any other course of action.

NATO helped ensure the defense of Western Europe during the Cold War. Since the early 1990's, it has engaged in efforts to stabilize regions where, if left unchecked, disorders could lead to escalating conflict and, ultimately, increased threats to NATO nations. It is clearly in NATO's interests to contribute to peace and stability in strategic regions well beyond Europe that are marred by violence and instability.

The new anti-terrorism mission that NATO has embraced carries many risks, but it also constitutes an enormous opportunity to invigorate an alliance whose future was uncertain only a short time ago. The active and effective involvement of NATO in the

global war on terrorism offers tremendous benefits to Alliance security and promotes the cooperation between nations that is critical to defeating this global menace. Yet in order for such an endeavor to be successful, each member nation of the Alliance must view terrorism as an on-going threat to its own population and institutions and must, therefore, adapt its own capabilities in order to counter this threat in an effective, unified and forceful way.

In order for this global war against terrorism to be won, the members of the Atlantic Alliance must never forget the lessons of the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001. Victory over terrorism and the continued relevance of NATO are by no means foregone conclusions. Statesmanship of the highest order and effective leadership of this long-standing alliance will be required in order to enable NATO to confront and triumph over the daunting challenges of the new century.

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